

Washington, DC -- Following a meeting yesterday with representatives of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) announced that he is an original cosponsor of the bipartisan Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America (EAT Healthy) Act. The EAT Healthy American Act would ensure New York agricultural interests are protected as Congress begins to reauthorize the Farm Bill.

“The EAT Healthy America Act ensures that farms in New York, from family-run organic apple orchards to our nationally known vineyards, will directly benefit from federal support and recognition in the upcoming Farm Bill,” Arcuri said. “I will fight to provide hard-working family farms with the tools they need to grow our economy.”

The EAT Health Act focuses on specialty crops, such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, maple products, dried fruits and nursery plants. The act would ensure that crops important to the economy of the 24th district, like wine grapes, receive full and equal consideration of federal resources to promote their sustainability and competitiveness in the upcoming Farm Bill.

“Too often specialty crops, from vegetables to grapes, are left behind,” Arcuri said. “I will do all I can to make sure the interests of farmers in New York are taken care of in the upcoming Farm Bill.”

To foster a globally competitive specialty crop industry this legislation would increase market access, encourage and facilitate consumption of nutritious products, fund research programs and increase opportunities for family farmers in conservation programs.

The EAT Healthy Act would:

- Increase access to valuable export markets by increasing programs for technical assistance and investments in global competitiveness for specialty corps.
- Require the school lunch and school breakfast programs to adhere to the 2005 USDA Dietary Guidelines, expand the fruit and vegetable snack program in schools, and develop new nutrition promotion programs to assist producers.

- Invest in new research priorities for specialty crops and research into the prevention of invasive plant pests and diseases.
- Expand opportunities for specialty crop producers to be part of conservation programs by recognizing the unique characteristics of their farming.

Representatives Dennis Cardoza (D-CA), Randy Kuhl (R-NY), John Salazar (D-CO), Adam Putnam (R-FL), Rick Larsen (D-WA), and Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) introduced the Equitable Agriculture Today for a Healthy America Act (EAT Healthy America Act). The EAT Healthy Act is supported by New York State wine and grape organizations.

The Congressional Wine Caucus, of which Arcuri is a member, recently oversaw a national economic impact study which concluded that the wine, grape and grape products industries contribute over \$162 billion to the American economy each year – over \$6 billion in New York. Additionally, New York ranks third in wine and grape production around the country. In the 24th district, vineyards are a major source of economic growth as local businesses, as well as centers of regional tourism.

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